Quarterly Report 2014/Q4

Town of Smyrna, Delaware





MAYOR H. JOANNE MASTEN
OCTOBER 2014 - DECEMBER 2014



February 2015

Have you kept those New Year's Resolutions? Good for you! May I suggest one more for your list!

In 2015, resolve to get more involved in Smyrna! There are so many worthwhile community service organizations in town that need your time and talents to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Why not spend an afternoon helping out at the Boys & Girls Club, with the Police Athletic League, or the local Pop Warner Football Leagues? The young people would surely benefit from your knowledge, guidance, and thoughtfulness.

If art and history are more to your liking, try spending a few hours per week at the Smyrna Opera House, Belmont Hall, Smyrna Public Library, or the Smyrna Museum. These organizations need everyone's help to keep local history and traditions alive and to pass them on to the next generation.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to submit my quarterly report to you. The report, covering the period October 2014 to December 2014, highlights a variety of town activities and initiatives. I believe you will be pleased with the town's commitment to everyday excellence and the provision of impartial municipal services to all.

On behalf of the entire Smyrna Town Council and all town employees, get involved! We need your energy, excitement, and talent to help our community grow and prosper.

Respectfully,

H. Joanne Masten H. Joanne Masten Mayor

SMYRNA TOWN COUNCIL
REGINA I. BROWN · JOHN L. EMBERT III · ANTHONY H. DEFEO · ROBERT C. JOHNSON · ANDREA C. RODRIGUEZ · VALERIE M. WHITE
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Quarterly Departmental Updates:

Reporting Period October 2014 – December 2014

Accounting & Business Services Department

Gary Stulir, Manager

The overall mission of the Accounting & Business Services Department (ABS) is to ensure the town continues to meet its budgetary and operational goals and objectives in the most cost efficient and effective manner.

For the time period 10/1/2014 - 12/31/2014, the ABS processed 15,556 individual payments totaling nearly \$6million. ABS also issued 988 checks totaling over \$6.3million.

Last autumn as we prepared for the approaching 2015 fiscal year, ABS leadership provided sound financial and budgeting advice to the town's Finance Committee and Town Council to ensure taxpayer funds were responsibly allocated among departments and projects. ABS also managed the process of ensuring all employees hired after 2012 were accepted into State of Delaware's County & Municipal Pension Plan.

As the ABS manages numerous accounting and financial management services, staff participated in essential training and continuing education opportunities which complemented their existing skills and has led to increased productivity and overall operational efficiency. This training included seminars provided by SunGard Public Sector, a leading provider of software and services for local governments, public safety and justice agencies, and nonprofits.

Building & Inspections Department

George DeBenedictis, Manager

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. George DeBenedictis as the new Manager of the Department of Building & Inspections. Mr. DeBenedictis joined town service on December 1, 2014.

The Department of Building & Inspections supports the health, safety, and quality of life for the residents and visitors of Smyrna through enforcement of various town code provisions as well as International Code Council guidelines. The permitting and inspection process promotes high quality design and construction standards as well as the historic conservation and redevelopment of the town's existing buildings.

Below is a chart depicting the number and valuation of building permits issued for the period 10/1/14 - 12/31/14:

Type of Construction	Quantity	Construction Value	Permit Fees	Admin. Fees	C/O Fees
Commercial Buildings	0	0	0	0	0
Tenant Fit-Outs	4	881300	9847	0	160
Signs	3	400	606	0	0
Single Family	12	1745798	19649	0	480

Apartments	0	0	0	0	0
Townhomes	0	0	0	0	0
Duplex	0	0	0	0	0
Additions	5	14840	332	0	0
(includes decks)					
Renovations	4	14245	270	0	0
(Includes windows,					
roof, siding, etc.)					
Fences	8	10605	387	80	0
Sheds	5	12195	277	0	0
Pools/Hot tubs	1	25000	304	0	0
Manuf. Homes	0	0	0	0	0
Misc.	16	48075	938	51	0
Demolition	3	0	1000	500	0
Change of Use	0	0	0	0	0
Total	61	\$2,752,458	\$33,610	\$631	\$640

Building & Inspections leadership have also become members of the State of Delaware's Hoarding Assessment and Response Team (HART), which is charged with the task of developing solutions and coordinating responses to hoarding cases. HART is comprised of police and fire agencies, local hospitals, code enforcement officials, the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the Delaware Division of Public Health, as well as animal welfare officials.

Information Technology & Billing Department

James Markow, Manager

The Information Technology & Billing Department (ITB) manages numerous government functions including utility and tax billing, computer systems management, and voter operations. ITB staff works diligently to improve the internal systems which not only enable town employees to work more efficiently, but also enhance the overall customer experience for our residents.

In an effort to improve utility service delivery, the ITB has recently installed a new meter reading system which allows the reading of 2,000 utility meters remotely. This meter upgrade is vitally important to the town's utility customers for three reasons: 1) the meters may potentially save taxpayer dollars by greatly reducing the labor and transportation costs of on-site service calls; 2) the meters will improve billing accuracy by eliminating meter reading errors; and 3) the meters will give the town the ability to determine system anomalies more quickly and further enables the town to take corrective action before our customers realize there was ever a problem.

The town's social media presence is maintained daily by ITB staff. The web page (www.smyrna.delaware.gov), Facebook, and Twitter are used to keep our residents informed of the most current municipal news, information, and employment opportunities.

Library

Beverly Hirt, Director

Staff of the Smyrna Public Library continue their dedication to providing an environment where lifelong learning is encouraged, creativity is nurtured, and all residents are welcomed.

The Winter Reading Program Challenge, themed *Hot Reads for Cold Nights*, is currently underway and ends on February 28, 2015. The program began on December 2, 2014 and is a 50 book challenge. Prizes will be awarded based upon the number of points earned from reading.

Library staff began preparations for the receipt of new computers from the State of Delaware. The new computers will enable the library to serve more patrons; specifically children and families who do not have internet access at their homes, or those adults who need assistance in resume preparation and subsequently applying for employment opportunities.

Due to popular demand, the library's GED program has continued over the winter months and has helped hundreds of residents prepare for GED testing. Please contact the library for more information and for class times.

Below are statistics on library programs and services for the winter quarter 2014:

	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Attendance - Total	8007	5961	5904
Attendance - Night	438	249	323
Children's Programs	21	15	10
Young Adult Programs	1	1	1
Adult Programs	19	15	7
Student Internet Usage	149	81	87
Internet Usage	1137	818	775
Wireless Usage	341	280	270
Registrations - Overdrive	13	n/a	n/a
Check Outs - Overdrive	548	455	577
Interlibrary Loans (Out-of-State)	27	7	10
RSVP Hours (Modern Maturity Volunteer)	51 hours	41.75 hours	34.25 hours

Planning & Zoning Department

Janet Vinc, Manager

All new businesses within town limits must be approved for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance which ensures the activity of business is consistent with the general character and use of the proposed area or neighborhood. The Planning & Zoning Department (P&Z) manages this process and helps potential business owners find the most appropriate location in Smyrna. The Department granted seven Certificate of Zoning Compliances during this period.

In November 2014, the P&Z Department created a new South Corridor Zoning District (SCZ). The (SCZ) applies to those parcels fronting U.S. Route 13, from Lake Como south to the intersection of Carter Road. The purpose of the SCZ District is to provide regulations and graphic design standards to enhance both

the function and appearance of the U.S. Route 13 Corridor through the implementation of strategies outlined in both the Smyrna U.S. 13 Corridor Plan and Design Book as well as the Town of Smyrna Comprehensive Plan.

This past fall, P&Z and the town's Economic Development Consultant submitted Smyrna's application for the Downtown Development District Program (DDD). Sponsored by the State of Delaware, the DDD Program provides economic development incentives that promote revitalization of downtown areas.

The P&Z Department is also engaged in ongoing research and discussions with the P&Z Commission regarding a newly proposed zoning district to allow for development of larger residences on larger lots, with standards that would be consistent with the intent of the Neighborhood Residential Land Use classification.

Police Department

Norman Wood, Chief of Police

The Smyrna Police Department (SPD) continued its dedication to engaging and building relationships within the community. Several of their latest initiatives are listed below:

The SPD continued to host its popular *Coffee with a Cop Program* at the Bridgeway Family Restaurant (15 E. Glenwood Avenue). *Coffee with a Cop*, a national initiative developed by the United States Department of Justice - Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, is designed to facilitate meaningful discussions and build relationships between local police departments and the communities in which they serve. Smyrna's *Coffee with a Cop* steadily grows in attendance each month.

SPD officers attended several community and civic association meetings this past fall, including those in the Worthington and the Bon Ayre communities. Officers discussed neighborhood issues and presented a variety of information about how residents can keep both themselves and their property safe from unsavory individuals.

In October 2014, SPD launched its very own "App" for Androids and iPhones. With this app citizens are able to follow the latest tweets from the Department, send anonymous tips, commend an officer, submit feedback, ask questions, get directions to the police station, and easily find officer contact information. The App can be downloaded by searching for *My Police Department or MyPD* in the iPhone or Android marketplace. The police app is available to the public free of charge and is also free of any advertisements. Once downloaded simply navigate to the *Smyrna Police*.

This past holiday season, SPD and Clayton Police Department joined forces to put holiday smiles on the faces of 27 children and their families with the very successful *Shop with a Cop Program*. *Shop with a Cop* provided an opportunity for underprivileged children in the community to go Christmas shopping. Police officers helped the children shop for themselves and their families, and also encouraged them to purchase an item of necessity such a jacket, hat, and gloves. The program was funded by numerous private donations.

Public Information/Community Relations

Dawn Thompson, Public Information Officer (PIO)

Remember how much fun the first Smyrna at Night Music Festival was in June 2014? Well, stay tuned! The Public Information Officer (PIO) has been participating in meetings to determine community interest and financial feasibility of a second music festival to be held in early June 2015.

The PIO worked with Councilmember John Embert and the Planning & Zoning Director in the planning and execution of the Town's Annual Veteran's Day Recognition Program. The program, held this past November at the Smyrna Opera House, was designed to annually honor seven local veterans who have served our town, state, and nation with valor, pride, and honor. The 2014 honorees were: Mr. Daniel Bloxom, Mr. David Bruner, Mr. William Clifton, Ms. Jennifer Coulbourne, Mr. Anthony DeFeo, Sr., Mr. Harvey Gillis, and Mr. Eric Young. All honorees will be honored with a banner hung along Market Street Plaza, which was designated with the honorary street name – Patriots Plaza.

The PIO has written a number of proclamations and resolutions including: sympathy to the Family of Former Councilmember Kenneth Brown, retirement of town employee Frank Chase, congratulating Sheridan's Irish Pub on their 10th anniversary, honorary street naming of Market Street Plaza to Patriots Plaza, recognizing Pancreatic Cancer Month, and numerous Veterans Day recognitions.

Finally, the PIO is the founder and current editor of *The Duck Creek Courier*, the newsletter for town employees. The quarterly newsletter is designed to engage, entertain, and inform employees of new programs, policies, and opportunities, as well as to celebrate the accomplishments of town personnel.

Public Works/Electric Department

Bill Evans, Director

The Commerce Street Utility Project was completed in December 2014. The project, encompassing Commerce Street from Market to East Streets, was necessary to replace old water/sewer pipes and install electric conduit underground. The work also included storm drainage upgrades, street repaving, and the installation of Americans with Disabilities Act complaint curb ramps at pedestrian crossings. The project was funded by loans from the Delaware Office of State Drinking Water and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control.

Electrical upgrades have been recently completed in the Green Meadows neighborhood. These upgrades are important to improve overall service delivery and customer satisfaction, as well as to reduce the frequency of outages and other systematic impediments.

Public Works Water personnel continue to evaluate operations at Water Well House #3 which is located in the Gardenside neighborhood. Water Well House #3 services areas in and around the communities of Sunnyside, Bon Ayre, and Gardenside.

Finally, the Department is currently exploring the viability and associated costs to convert the existing street lighting along Glenwood Avenue, which is currently comprised of mercury vapor and sodium, to LED (Light Emitting Diode) lighting. The LED lighting will provide a whiter, brighter light which will improve visibility and public safety while lowering energy consumption and maintenance costs. LED lighting typically has a life expectancy exceeding 50,000 hours, which is over three times longer than the existing fixtures.